

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
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AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMCONSUL BELIZE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP, GT (TODMAN, TERENCE A.)
SUBJ: TODMAN VISIT - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PRESS ENCOUNTERS

REF: 77 STATE 308366

1. FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, WITH SUGGESTED RESPONSE, COULD ARISE IN ONE
OR ANOTHER FORM DURING VISIT:

Q. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CHANGE IN THE US POSITION ON BELIZEAN
INDEPENDANCE? IS THE US PRESSING FOR A SETTLEMENT INVOLVING TRANSFER
OF TERRITORY? WHAT IS THE US ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS?

A. AS OUR ABSTENTION ON THE RECENT UN RESOLUTIONS DEMONSTRATED,
WE REMAIN NEUTRAL IN THE DISPUTE. WE HAVE KEPT IN TOUCH WITH BOTH
SIDES WITH A VIEW TO ENCOURAGING PROGRESS IN THE ONGOING TALKS. WE
EARENSTLY HOPE OUR FRIENDS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DISPUTE WILL REACH
AN AMICABLE, NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. WE WOULD APPLAUD ANY FORMULA FOR
SETTLEMENT, INCLUDING ONE RESULTING IN BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE, WHICH
NET WITH THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED.

Q. DID THE US HAVE ANY ROLE IN BARBADOS' CONFISCATION OF THE
AMMUNITION SHIPMENT BOUND FOR GUATEMALA?

A. WE CONSIDER THIS STRICTLY A MATTER BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS
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CONCERNED. CERTAINLY WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ACTION OF THE
BARBADIAN AUTHORITIES. WE OURSELVES SELL AMMUNITION TO GUATEMALA
AND DO NOT INTERFERE WITH PURCHASES TRANSITING OUR TERRITORY.

Q. IS YOUR VISIT CONNECTED WITH THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECT-
IONS? HOW DOES THE US VIEW THE ELECTIONS?

A. THE TIMING OF MY TRIP IS UNRELATED TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS
EITHER HERE OR IN COSTA RICA. IT WOULD BE UNSEEMLY TO COMMENT ON

A CAMPAIGN STILL IN PROGRESS, BUT IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT WE APPLAUD PRESIDENT LAUGERUD'S COMMITMENT TO FREE AND CORRECT ELECTIONS. WE WOULD HOPE TO MAINTAIN FREINDLY RELATIONS WITH THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE REGARDLESS WHO WINS.

Q. HOW DOES THE US VIEW THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN GUATEMALA?

A. WE HOPE THE POSITIVE TREND OF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE UNDER FUTURE GOVERNMENTS. WE ALSO WELCOME YOUR GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR THE CREATION OF A UN HIGH COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AS WELL AS ITS DETERMINATION TO MOVE FORWARD WITH RATIFICATION OF THE SAN JOSE PACT.

Q. MANY HERE SAY YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY TENDS TO PROTECT AND ENCOURAGE CRIMINALS AND TERRORISTS? YOUR VIEW?

A. WE HOLD THAT CRIME AND TERRORISM CAN BE EFFECTIVELY COMBATTED THROUGH LEGAL MEANS. IN THE LONG RUN, VIOLATIONS OF DUE PROCESS AND STANDARD CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES ONLY AGGRAVATE THE PROBLEMS THEY WERE MEANT TO SOLVE.

Q. HOW DOES THE US JUSTIFY CLOSER TIES WITH CUBA AND OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AT A TIME WHEN PRESIDENT CARTER PREACHES HUMAN RIGHTS TO FRIENDS WITH BETTER RECORDS? WHY THE DOUBLE STANDARD?

A. WITH CUBA AS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WITH WHICH WE HAVE SERIOUS DIFFERENCES, WE BELIEVE WE CAN BEST PURSUE OUR INTERESTS THROUGH DIALOGUE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE HAVE ABANDONED OUR CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SUCH PLACES. WHATEVER THE RANGE OF NATIONAL INTERESTS WHICH SHAPE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS, BE THEY FRIENDLY OR ANTAGONISTIC, WE MAKE IT CLEAR THAT OUR ASSOCIATION MAY BE AFFECTED BY HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIONS. WE READILY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACKNOWLEDGE THAT STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS MAY, IN GIVEN INSTANCES, TAKE PRECEDENCE.

Q. WHAT ARE PROSPECTS FOR LIFTING THE US"ARMS EMBARGO" AGAINST GUATEMALA?

A. LET ME CLARIFY THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AN EMBARGO ON THE SALE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO GUATEMALA. WE APPROVE A NUMBER OF PURCHASE REQUESTS OVER THE PAST YEAR. OTHERS ARE BEING PROCESSED. IT IS TRUE THAT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT'S OWN DECISION OUR CONGRESS EXCLUDED GUATEMALA FROM RECEIVING USG CREDITS FOR MILITARY PURCHASES UNDER THE FY 1978 LEGISLATION. DECISIONS ARE MADE ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS, AND WE LOOK HARD AT PURCHASE REQUESTS FROM ALL QUARTERS. WE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT FACTORS, SUCH AS HUMAN RIGHTS CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH OUR LAW REQUIRES US TO CONSIDER AS WELL AS PRESIDENT CARTER'S DETERMINATION TO CUT BACK THE LEVEL OF FOREIGN ARMS SALES WORLDWIDE.

Q. WHAT PROSPECTS DO YOU SEE FOR MOVEMENT IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION PROCESS?

A. WE HAVE BEEN GREATLY ENCOURAGE BY THE STEPS TAKEN BY HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR TOWARD RESOLVING THEIR DIFFERENCES. WE HOPE THE FUTURE WILL OPEN UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION AMONG THE FIVE.

2. BELIEVE DEPARTMENT IS IN BETTER POSITION TO DEAL WITH SUCH POSSIBLE NON-BILATERAL PRESS THEMES AS (A) CANAL TREATY RATIFICATION PROSPECTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTION; (B) ACTIONS RELATIVE TO DECLINE OF THE DOLLAR; (C) MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT OUTLOOKV (D) REACTION TO CHILEAN PLEBISCITE; AND (E) COMMODITY TRADE CONCERNS, E.G. US SUGAR TARIFF IMPLICATIONS, AND BEEF QUOTAS.

4. ALSO DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PREPARE BRIEFING MATERIAL ON STATUS OF SHIPPING DISPUTE IN LIGHT OF SITIATION PREVAILING AT THE TIME. WE WOULD NOT ANTICIPATE QUESTION IF FMC DEFERS COUNTERVAILING FEES.
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